

**Social and Civic Responsibility
Social Studies Unit
5th Grade
Standard 3 Objectives 1 and 2**

**How a Bill Becomes a Law
&
The Bill of Rights and Me**

By
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How a Bill Becomes a Law

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Life Skills:

Social and Civic Responsibility

Time Frame:

5 class periods
30 minutes each

Group Size:

Large Groups

Enduring Understanding:

The constitution established principles that guide the government's decision making ability, providing the framework through which we can evaluate our nation's progress and suggest means for improvement.

Essential Question:

Why are bills and laws important?

Main Curriculum Tie:

Social Studies 5th Grade
Standard 3 Objective 1
Assess the underlying principles of the US Constitution.

Materials:

- Schoolhouse Rock Video – "I'm Just a Bill"
- Chart paper for each group
- Markers
- Worksheet from "Kids in the House" website

Background for Teachers:

The teacher needs to understand the Constitution and the process of passing laws in the United States Congress.

Student Prior Knowledge:

The students will need to understand that the Constitution serves as an umbrella for all of the laws that are passed in the United States.

Intended Learning Outcome:

The students will be able to describe the process of passing a law.

Instructional Procedures:

Day One:

1. Brainstorm with students a list of issues that concern them about the environment, public health, civic rights, economic disparities, social injustices, etc. List these on the chalkboard. Hold a discussion regarding the topics listed.
2. Ask the students "Suppose that you wanted to have congress pass a law related to your concern. What are the steps that would be taken to pass a law?"
3. Pre-assessment – Have the students take out a sheet of paper and write a paragraph outlining how laws are made. Collect student responses and evaluate for understanding.

Day Two:

4. Show Schoolhouse Rock – "I'm Just a Bill" video. Divide the students into groups and assign them to create a flow chart that outlines how a bill becomes a law. Show video a second time.
5. Allow the students to complete the flow chart on chart paper. Provide additional resources as necessary.
6. Groups share charts with the class.

Day Three-Five: (Modify as necessary)

7. The website, Kids in the House, provides a worksheet and outline that allows students to follow the passing of a bill in the United State Congress. It links to the Library of Congress – Thomas site. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the Library of Congress – Thomas site before giving the assignment to students.

Websites:

- Kids in the House – How a Bill Becomes a Law
clerkkids.house.gov/laws
This site provides an outline and worksheet for acquainting students with how a bill is passed in congress.

Assessment Plan:

Pre/Post Lesson Assessment – The students will write a paragraph that describes the process of passing a law.

Extension:

Have groups write bills (based on the concerns from the list of issues generated in the brainstorming session) in committees. Have part of the students be Congress and debate and vote on the bill. The next group of students would be the Senate. They too should discuss and vote on the bill. If it passes they send it on to the President (teacher) who can sign the bill or veto it.

The Bill of Rights and Me

By
Lynda Davis

Life Skills:

Social and Civic Responsibility

Time Frame:

3 class periods
45 minutes each

Group Size:

Small Groups

Enduring Understanding:

The United States Constitution reflects our national beliefs about people, rights, and government.

Essential Question:

How does the Bill of Rights relate to me today?

Main Curriculum Tie:

Social Studies – 5th Grade
Standard 3 Objective 2

Assess how the U.S. constitution has been amended and interpreted over time and the impact these amendments have had on the rights and responsibilities of citizens of the United States.

Materials:

- Words to the Bill of Rights
- Poster Paper
- Makers
- Magazines (optional)

Background for Teachers:

The United States Constitution was ratified in 1787. It came under heavy criticism by Anti-Federalists who were upset that certain guarantees of individual rights were not included. Others in the Constitutional Convention only approved of the Constitution on the understanding that a guarantee of such rights would be added. The Bill of Rights written by James Madison were the first additions or amendments made to the Constitution. They guarantee certain individual rights like freedom of speech, religion, the right to petition the government for redress of grievances, the right to a jury, the right to bear arms, and other rights. The Bill of Rights was ratified in 1791.

Student Prior Knowledge:

Students should know why the Constitution was created, what it said, and what freedom the Bill of Rights gave to the people. The students need to know that the Founding Fathers worried about the basic rights of the citizens. These rights were not included in the Constitution. The Signers (James Madison) created the Bill of Rights. These ten rights were added amendments to the Constitution.

Instructional Procedures:

- Step 1: Have students look up in the Constitution where the framers included a list of guarantees for the people of this country. Does the Constitution mention the people anywhere in the 1st article? 2nd? 3rd? (Briefly review the content of the seven articles and lead the class to the conclusion that there is no list of PEOPLE'S rights in the core of the Constitution.) Lead a discussion encouraging students to think about the importance of such a list included in this the "Supreme Law of the Land." How can we as people be sure we have the rights we desire if those rights are not written down somewhere and what better place than the Supreme Law of the Land?
- Step 2: Write "Bill of Rights" on the board and ask the class for definitions. Explain to the class that the Bill of Rights is the first 10 amendments made to the Constitution. Make sure students understand that an amendment is a change to the Constitution (You may wish to review Article 5 of the Constitution in which the process of amendments is discussed. It may also be interesting to note that in the 200 plus years since the writing of this sacred document, only 27 "changes" or amendments have been made.) Also, explain that these first 10 are our guarantees or certain rights as people. Some of these rights protect those accused of a crime; other rights protect the minority; each of the amendments included in the Bill of Rights help to ensure a more democratic society and lessens the possibility of an usurpation of power by those in authority.
- Step 3: Divide the class into groups of three. Assign each group one of the ten amendments to the Constitution. Each group will research their amendment. They need to know why the amendment was important for the time, how it protects citizens and how it applies to our current needs.
- Step 4: Each group is given the task of creating a poster for their amendment. Their poster should advertise (explain) the amendment in "5th grade" vocabulary and relate the amendment to their life. A rubric is provided to guide the process. The posters will be shared in the class and then in the hall.

Assessment Plan:

Pre-assessment: Have students number a paper from one to ten. Have them list the ten amendments to the Constitution.

Post-assessment: poster

Bill of Rights Advertisement Poster

Name: _____

Description: Students are grouped in pairs or groups of 3 to complete an advertisement on the Bill of Rights. Each group is assigned one of the ten amendments in the Bill of Rights to produce an advertising agency poster on their assigned amendment

| | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Required Elements | The poster includes all required elements as well as additional information | All required elements are included on the poster. | All but 1 of the required elements are included on the poster. | Several required elements were missing |
| Graphics - Relevance | All graphics are related to the topic and make it easier to understand. | All graphics are related to the topic and most make it easier to understand. | Some graphics relate to the topic. | Graphics do not relate to the topic |
| Attractiveness | The poster is exceptionally attractive in terms of design, layout, and neatness. | The poster is attractive in terms of design, layout and neatness | The poster is acceptably attractive though it may be a bit messy. | The poster is distractingly messy or very poorly designed. It is not attractive |
| Readability | All items of importance on the poster are clearly labeled with labels that can be read from at least 3 ft. away. | Almost all items of importance on the poster are clearly labeled with labels that can be read from at least 3 ft. away. | Many items of importance on the poster are clearly labeled with labels that can be read from at least 3 ft. away. | Labels are too small to view OR no important items were labeled |
| Grammar | There are no grammatical/mechanical mistakes on the poster. | There are 1-2 grammatical/mechanical mistakes on the poster. | There are 3-4 grammatical/mechanical mistakes on the poster. | There are more than 4 grammatical/mechanical mistakes on the poster. |
| Interpretation of Amendment | The poster accurately portrays the amendment that was assigned | The poster provides a somewhat accurate representation of the amendment | The poster has a loose tie to the amendment assigned | The poster is not an accurate representation of the amendment |



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